SUPER SECRET HIDING PLACES

by Mark Shulman

SCHOLASTIC

SUPER SECRET!

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WHAT HAVE YOU GOT TO HIDE?

Where do you keep your diary? Your letters and notes? Your valuables? And all the things you never want to lose?

You can keep your favorite items safe without a safe, or even a lock. Open your eyes to boring little places where nobody looks. Build fake walls and other secret vaults. Leave innocent, stray clues that guide your friends to your special coded maps, and more.

You'll discover secret hiding places at home, at school, and in between. And you'll find extra secret hiding places at:

www.SecretHidingPlaces.com

But don't forget where you hid this book. Now hide it!

THE 12 LAWS OF HIDING STUFF

1 THE LAW OF LEAVE IT ALONE

Hide it once, hide it well, and fight the urge to go back. Attracting too much attention will leave clues and give away the game. Out of sight, out of mind.

2 THE LAW OF FEWER FOOTPRINTS

Your hiding places shouldn't be busy places. Pick areas that people don't use all the time or places where they won't usually stop. Hiding places often get discovered on cleaning day.

3 THE LAW OF IGNORE ME

Make sure the area around your hiding place looks normal and boring. And don't make your vault too tricky or complex. Cleverness sometimes backfires, while simple places get ignored.

4 THE LAW OF WISE PLANNING

Before you hide it, know how often you'll want it. Some tricky hiding places are better for the long term. Also have a few quick places ready for instant access.

5 THE LAW OF MIX IT UP

Don't use only one kind of hiding place. People who do are easy to figure out. Also be sure to switch places around now and then, just to be safe.

6 THE LAW OF OPEN EYES

New hiding places spring up all the time. Stay on the lookout, then move quickly and quietly. Scout the place a bit first. Make sure no one's focused on it, and that it isn't about to be sold, moved, or trashed.

7 THE LAW OF PLAYING SAFE

Too many hiding places at once are harder to manage. They're also easier for others to find. Keep it under control.

8 THE LAW OF TREASURE ISLAND

Make coded treasure maps and update them when you need to. Make your code easy to remember and use. Keep your maps in special map hiding places.

9 THE LAW OF SECRETS

Try to avoid telling other people about your secret hiding places. You may feel clever, but once the secret is out, you can't get it back. If you do show off your places, only show a few of them.

10 THE LAW OF NATURE

Food goes bad quickly. Avoid hiding anything except hard candy, like lollipops. Even then, think about the awful things heat and time can do to food. Make only one hiding place for that candy, and keep it fresh.

11 THE LAW OF FAIR PLAY

Use your new powers for good. Don't hide other people's things from them. There's honor among hiders.

12 THE MASTER LAW

Never hide anything that will get you into trouble. Stay away from dangerous and stupid things. It's not fun to get hurt, or to hurt other people. You know you'll get caught—and punished. Why mess up your life when you're just a kid? Be smart. Hiding is really about creative thinking, making things, and having fun. **Now go have fun!**

SECRET GLOSSARY

Secret hiding places have their own special language. These are some of the official terms.

Cache

(cash) Noun: whatever item(s) you've hidden. *I keep a cache of comic books behind a fake wall.* Verb: to hide something. *I cached them there yesterday.*

Camouflage

(KAM-uh-flawzh) Verb: to decorate something so it blends into its environment. *I camouflaged the box by covering it with a jacket.* Noun: whatever helps something to hide. *I used my jacket as camouflage.*

Decoy

(DEE-koy) Noun: something used to fool, lure, or draw attention toward one thing or away from another. *The cardboard box says "old photos" but it's just a decoy for my trading cards.*

Drop

Noun: the place where a message or item has been left or hidden. *I left the note in the usual drop.* Verb: to leave something in a secret place where someone else will get it. *I made the drop this morning.*

Landmark

Noun: An obvious (and hopefully permanent) object used to help you hide or find something. *I'll hide the box under the third streetlight from the corner. That light will be our landmark.*

Partner

Noun: A person you team up with to create codes, send messages, build vaults, and make hiding places. *Tom is my spy partner.* Verb: To create a secret alliance. *When you do those things, you are partnering together.*

Surveillance

(sur-VAY-lints) Noun: keeping close (but secret) watch over something or someone. *The spy did not know that he was under surveillance.*

Vault

Noun: any compartment for keeping valuables safe. In this book, the vaults are the contraptions and inventions you create yourself. *Always keep your valuables in a vault.*

BEDROOM CHAMBERS

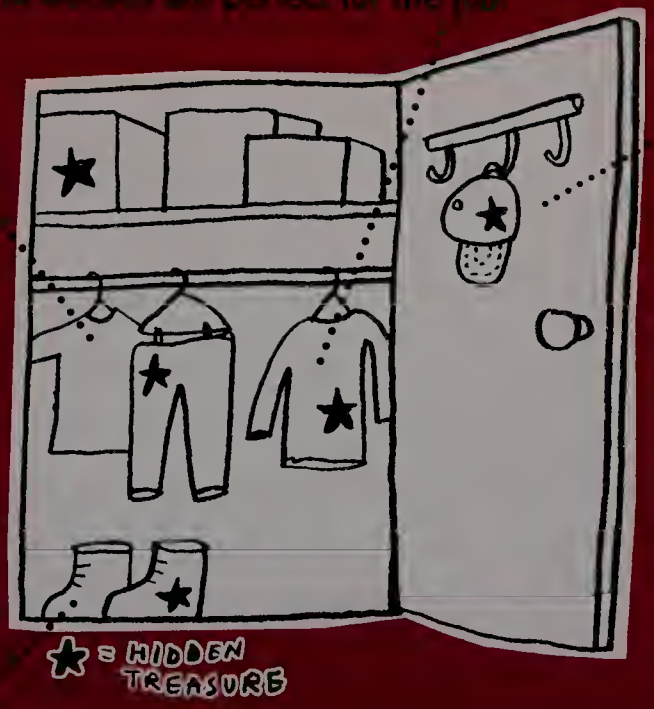
IN THE CLOSET

Pocket Packs:

The clothes in your closet are filled with pockets. Why keep them empty? During the warm months, your winter coat's pockets and sleeves are perfect for the job.

Hanger Upper:

Use a coat hanger as a decoy. Hang a reflective bag from the hanger, then put your clothes over it. Pants are especially good for this.



Hat Trick:

Hide a secret in a baseball cap. Then hang the cap from a hook. Or tape something inside a hat and put the hat out of reach.

Feet Feat:

Drop something small in a shoe and shake it toward the toe. Big items need boots. Put the shoes back where you've found them. Don't be too neat. If that's not your style, for your teen's room in a dirty way, you can hide stuff under the tissue box.

ON THE SHELF

SHELF AWARENESS:

Books in a bookcase don't always reach all the way to the back. Put those books on a high shelf, where it's hard to see what's behind them, and pull each book all the way to the front edge. The space between the books and the wall defines what you can hide back there. Removing a few books works just like a door.

BOOK IT:

Dollar bills, paper, and cards will fit inside the pages of a book if you only hide a few. Spread them throughout the book, making sure the edges don't show. If you have a hardback book with a paper jacket over it, remove the jacket and tape your treasure onto the hard cover. To learn how to cut a hiding place *into* an unwanted book, turn to page 42.

IM(MEDIA)TE HIDING PLACE:

Movie and video game boxes are fair game when you want to hide something small. Papers are best, because they don't rattle around even if someone shakes things up. Don't pick everyone's favorite.

PICTURE THIS:

Do you keep your photos in clear plastic sleeves, back to back in a photo album? Think about how easy it is to hide trading cards between them. People can even browse your photos without ever finding out.

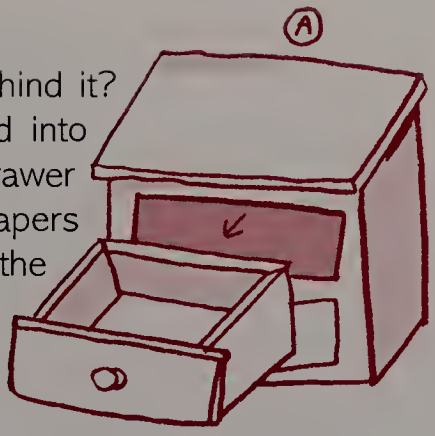
ARE YOU GAME?

Board games look so innocent . . . and hide so much. They're big, they're filled with noisy stuff, and they just sit there. Pick a game you don't really play anymore.

IN THE DRAWER

USE SOME PULL

They may look inside the drawer, but behind it? Flat items can be taped there, or tucked into taped-on envelopes. Make sure the drawer closes naturally. On lower drawers, tape papers under the bottom, but don't let them get in the way of the drawer. If what you're hiding is really flat, pull out the top drawer and tape your cache snugly under the bottom.

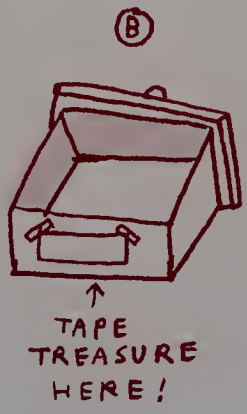


THE MESS ADVANTAGE:

Papers and money tucked into old magazines or inside old homework hide beautifully among the junk. If you've got a jar full of change, that might work, too.

SOCK IT TO THEM:

If your family usually rolls clean socks into balls, set aside a special pair in the drawer. Hide something in the toe of the sock and roll them both back up. If you actually need to wear the socks, move the item or walk funny.



WARNING: THE FIRST PLACE MANY PEOPLE LOOK IS UNDER THE CLOTHES IN DRESSER DRAWERS!

AROUND THE ROOM

TISSUE BOXING:

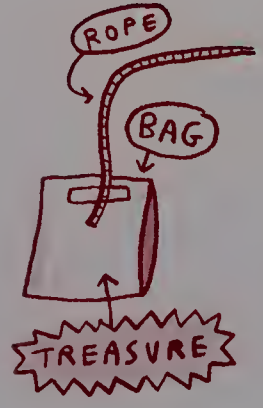
Half-full boxes of facial tissue make a very easy hide. Pinch the tissues in the middle and lift them all out in a few clumps. Don't take too many at once or you'll make a mess. Lay something inside the box bottom, and make sure it doesn't move around. Using a piece of cardboard as a false bottom is nothing to sneeze at. Lay the tissues flat and replace them in the same clumps you pulled out, but not pinched. Don't blow too often! If you do, add tissues from another box before your secret's out.

BATTERY POWER:

Inside your flashlights, your clocks, and your electronic toys you'll find a possible hiding place—the battery compartment. Be careful: DON'T PLUG ANYTHING IN and DON'T HIDE ANY METAL IN THERE. It can conduct electricity, shock you, or start a fire. Like they say at the supermarket, paper or plastic.

TOY STORY:

Speaking of old toys, take a look at some of yours. Can you tuck things inside without breaking anything? It's better to give away toys you don't want than ruin them, so be careful while you're being clever. Then put the toys away where toys belong. That messy toy box is another great place for hiding.



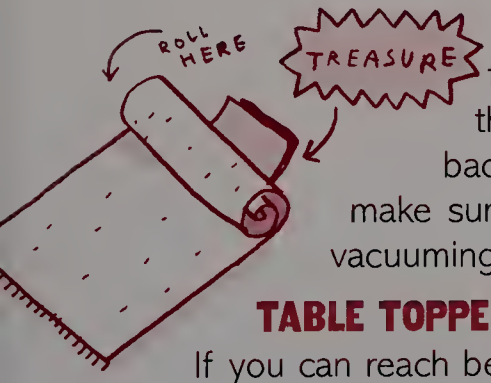
CORD TRICKS:

Tape a foot-long piece of string to a bag or envelope. Put the other end of the string under a lamp that's sitting on a dresser or desk. Run the string along the lamp cord and dangle the envelope between the furniture and the wall. A simple pull of the string is all you need.

GET FRAMED:

There are too many kinds of picture frames to explain here, but this idea isn't rocket science. Only use small, stand-up frames for regular photos. No wall frames, and stay away from old or important pictures that can't be replaced. Whatever you do, do it gently, since glass is usually involved. The thing you're hiding has to fit between the photo and the cardboard behind it. Make sure you can't see what you've hidden, and that the frame is hanging straight. And wipe off your fingerprints. . . .

FLOOR PLAN:



Got a throw rug that's not nailed to your floor? To hide a message in a flash, flip up the rug, drop your paper, and roll the rug back. This is best for short-term hides. Test to make sure no one will slip or trip, and be ready for vacuuming day.

TABLE TOPPER:

If you can reach beneath a table, you can tape an envelope or pouch there. Get one to match the table's color. Slide your hand underneath for a fast hide and a fast retrieve. Try to pick a table in a quiet corner. The lower, the better.

HIDE YOURSELF:

The number one question e-mailed to SecretHidingPlaces.com is "Where can I hide myself at home?" Never having been to your home, it's hard to say which doors and closets are best. But one place works anyplace. Take all your bedsheets and pull them to the foot of your bed. That big pile of sheets and blankets and pillows makes a great place to hide. And while you're making things, make sure you can breathe.

sssssssssssshhhhh!

SHADY MOVE:
Some rooms have roll-up window shades. Gently pull one down until the window is covered. Tape small, flat, flexible paper up near the top. Then give a small tug at the bottom. Don't let it snap back up—guide it, don't wreck it. This is where the spies in movies hide their maps.

BLINDS AMBITION:
If you have blinds in your room, the mechanism on top has a small surface. Nobody looks up there unless it's time to dust. A warning: When you're reaching for your cache, don't fall off your chair and break through the window. That will hurt.

COMPUTE THIS:
Hide little things under your computer keyboard . . . or mousepad. But be gentle. Don't put anything too close to a desktop computer or printer—the loose spaces help ventilation and avoid overheating.

BEDROOM PLACES TO AVOID:

- In your dresser among the clothes
- Between your mattress protector and the mattress
- Under the bed
- Under seat cushions
- Where vacuums go

POSTER HOST:

If you're allowed to tape or tack posters to your wall, pay attention. You can hide maps and secret documents on the wall behind your art. If you use tape, put a piece of clear tape on the wall directly under the place your poster connects to the wall. Put another piece on the bottom corners of your poster. Because the top tape sticks to the bottom tape and not the wall, it can be removed and replaced more easily. If you use pushpins, be careful not to make too big a hole in the wall, or the pins will fall out. Tape works better.

CAN IT:

If you're the one who empties the trash, and you use trash bags, good news. There's a quick hide right under your nose—so to speak—in the space between the bag and the bottom of the can. Don't expect anything here to last long, or smell good either. In and out.

HOUSEHOLD HIDEOUTS

You're not alone at home. Other people are living in the living room, bathing in the bathroom, and kitching in the kitchen. So you've got to be extra clever, and extra careful.

OUT-OF-THE-WAY PLACES

LUG THE LUGGAGE:

Most of the time, suitcases and trunks do nothing but fill up closets and other forgettable places. But keep up with the family travel schedule, or else your secret stuff will end up going far, far away.

BRIGHT IDEA:

Look at the nearest floor lamp. See how wide the base is? See how it rises in the middle? See someone screaming at you for knocking over the nice lamp and breaking the lightbulb? See how careful you need to be? Unplug anything electrical before you mess with it.

THE BIG EASY:

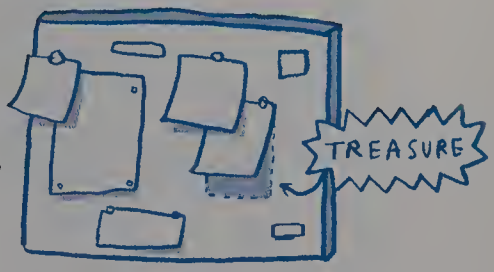
What goes under big, upholstered chairs with "skirts" along the bottom? Vacuums, yes. Eyeballs, no. There's usually fabric right under the chair—don't rip it. Instead, tape a small canister or plastic bottle inside one of the legs so you can't see the tape or the canister. Leave enough room at the top for easy access to tiny items.

UP WITH UPHOLSTERY:

If the fabric on your sofa, chairs, or throw pillows have zippers, then zip it. And keep it small.

TAKE A MEMO:

Refrigerator doors, family bulletin boards, and message walls are a notorious mess. Hide secret messages on sticky notes *behind* the artwork and phone numbers. Chances are, no one will notice for months.



OH, CHUTE:

If you live in a house with a laundry chute, this quick trick works like a lobster trap. Tape a length of string inside the chute (out of sight) and tape the other end to a zipper-lock bag. Send lightweight items down and haul them back when needed. Or measure the string to stop at the first-floor door, make the drop, then innocently go downstairs and claim your prize. Remember: Dirty clothes will interfere with your dirty work if you dawdle while you dangle.

CLOTH ENCOUNTERS:

Sometimes families have bedsheets or towels that are old or ugly and never get used. But no one throws them away. Remove the one on the bottom, fold your cache inside, and delicately put it back in place. This spot might be good for months . . . unless all your cousins are sleeping over soon. This also works with folded sweaters, especially in the summer.

HOUSEHOLD PLACES TO AVOID

* Near the TV, DVD, music, or game machines
* On top of ceiling fan blades
* Inside a movable (fake) ceiling
* In or near a fireplace

IN THE KITCHEN

Almost no place in the kitchen is good for hiding . . . too many people, too many dangerous items, and someone could get sick or hurt if you ruin their food. The list of things to avoid is very long. Hands off everywhere but these few places.

PROFESSIONAL BOXING:

You can use an ***empty*** box from cereal, cookies, or packaged foods, once you clean it out. Put your stuff in a plastic bag, and put the box in the back of the cupboard where it belongs. Don't put real food over it, because you'll ruin the food and possibly hurt someone. The box alone should do the job. Expect to get caught when someone gets hungry.

CAN IT:

When you open a can of cream, a can of corn, or a can of creamed corn, open it from the bottom instead of the top. Rinse it out, hide your cache in the can, and flip it over. Then push the can to the back of the cupboard. For extra secrecy, stack another can on top. Note: Your grown-ups will eventually find this one.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT:

On your long list of secret places, the subject of food should be crossed off.

Sorry to say, there are just too many risks in hiding things around food because:

* What you're hiding is probably not clean.
* The act of stashing can ruin the food.
* Food attracts people, so they'll easily discover your cache.
* Food goes bad quickly, attracting bugs and fuzzy mold.
* And most important, someone could accidentally eat and choke on whatever you've hidden.

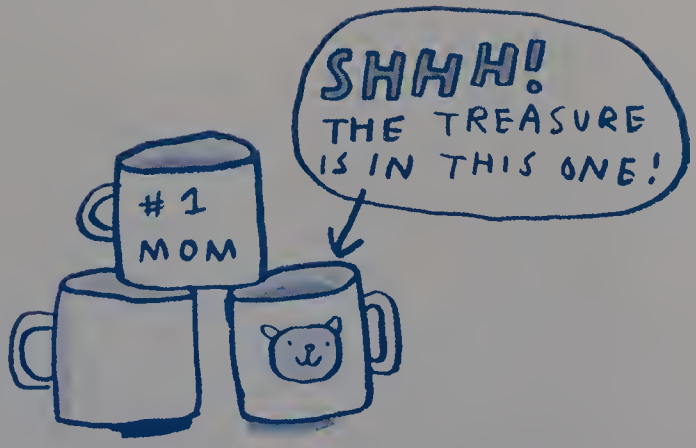
Chew on this and hide it elsewhere.

KITCHEN PLACES TO AVOID:

* Near ovens and stoves
* Around electrical appliances
* With anything that could end up in food
* Down the drain
* Near cleaning supplies

GET MUGGED:

Almost every kitchen has a cupboard filled with coffee mugs. A few in the front get used all the time, and the rest in the back get ignored. Dusty mugs are best. And forget hiding anything here that's dirty or yucky.



BOWLED OVER:

In the kitchen, you can probably find a fancy big bowl that only sees daylight at dinner parties. Try to figure out how often it's used, and see if you can reach it without breaking either the bowl or your skull. Be picky about what you hide here, since you'll be eating from that bowl one day.

SILVER WHERE:

It's highly unlikely that anyone will be looking under the tray where the silverware rests. Enough said.

BATH TIME

If you don't think you can find great hiding places in a room with no movable furniture, sit down and think for a minute.

THAT SINKING FEELING:

Lots of bathroom (and kitchen) sinks sit over cupboards. Right over the cupboard doors there's probably a panel that pretends to be a drawer. It isn't. Tape an envelope behind there for a fast, private hiding place. While you're down there, will it fit behind a pipe? Along the back wall, up high?

WARNING: THERE MIGHT BE DANGEROUS CHEMICALS AND CLEANERS UNDER THE SINK. BE VERY CAREFUL TO REMOVE THEM AND REPLACE THEM AFTER YOU'RE DONE. THEN WASH YOUR HANDS.

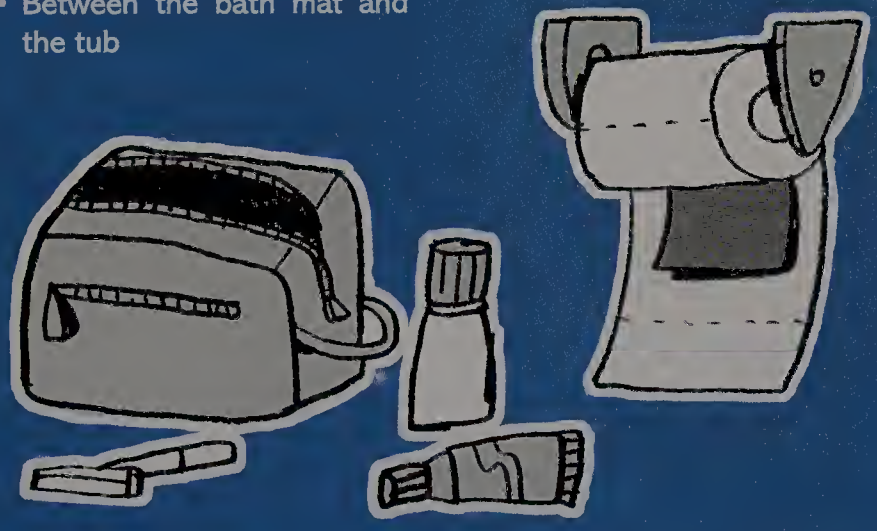
TANKS A LOT:

Here's one of the dumbest places in the house to hide things. Hide something small in an airtight, zipper-lock plastic bag. Tape it behind the toilet. Or very gently lift the lid of the toilet's water tank. Tape the bag to the top of the lid with masking tape, or other strong tape—not clear tape. Don't let the bag float or it might jam the works! These are the only two places in the toilet you want to go near. Also keep in mind that the toilet tank lid is heavy and can break easily—and it's expensive to replace.

BATHROOM QUICKLIST:

If it's small and you can roll it up tight, try these bathroom hides:

- In a travel toothbrush holder
- Rolled up inside the toilet paper roll
- In an innocent-looking box in the back of a cabinet
- Between the bath mat and the tub
- Behind the curtains, hanging at the top
- At the bottom of a rarely used travel toiletry kit (be careful this one doesn't travel)



WARNING: STAY OUT OF THE PLUMBING, THE DRAINS, THE FAN, THE MEDICINE CABINET, AND ANYTHING PEOPLE USE ON THEIR BODIES.

BASEMENTS, ATTICS, GARAGES, AND CATCH-ALL CLOSETS

If something seems boring and useful, you probably don't want to know what happens when it breaks. (Is that a sewer pipe or poisonous gas pipe? Hmmm . . .) Don't mess with smelly, sharp, or mechanical items either, like lawn mowers or furnaces. It's too easy to make a dumb move that will cost a lot of money . . . or hurt someone. Be smart.

HERE'S WHERE THE REAL SPIES WOULD HIDE IT:

• In an empty box that came with something that's in use, like a computer or waffle iron. • Under the holiday decorations (during the rest of the year). • Under the summer items in winter. • Under the winter items in summer. • Mixed in with a boring box full of papers. • In the box with the old clothes, scrapbooks, and ancient wedding stuff. • Inside a broken (but safe) household item—like an old vacuum cleaner or sewing machine.

THE GREAT OUTDOOR HIDING PLACES

Outdoor hiders have more places to hide. And more issues to think about. Do you want to hide it for a long time . . . or for just a short while? Are other people likely to come poking around? Will the weather be a factor? Ponder before placement.

NEAR HOME

TRICKY TRASH:

You think trash is disgusting? So does everyone else. If you're clever, you can hide your goodies in any kind of box or bag that looks like trash. Then put it where garbage goes—under your family's trash can or close enough. Trash is so safe you could hide diamonds in it, but stick to the trash you know. Also, don't expect your trash cache to stick around after garbage day this is a very short-term hide

CONSTRUCTION OBSTRUCTION:

Somewhere near home, somebody's building something, fixing something, or tearing something up. Chances are they probably left some materials here and there in temporary piles. That's right: *temporary.* Bricks, rocks, lumber, and other building supplies have more important things to do besides hiding your stuff. So be careful *and* quick.

THE FENCE SITTER:

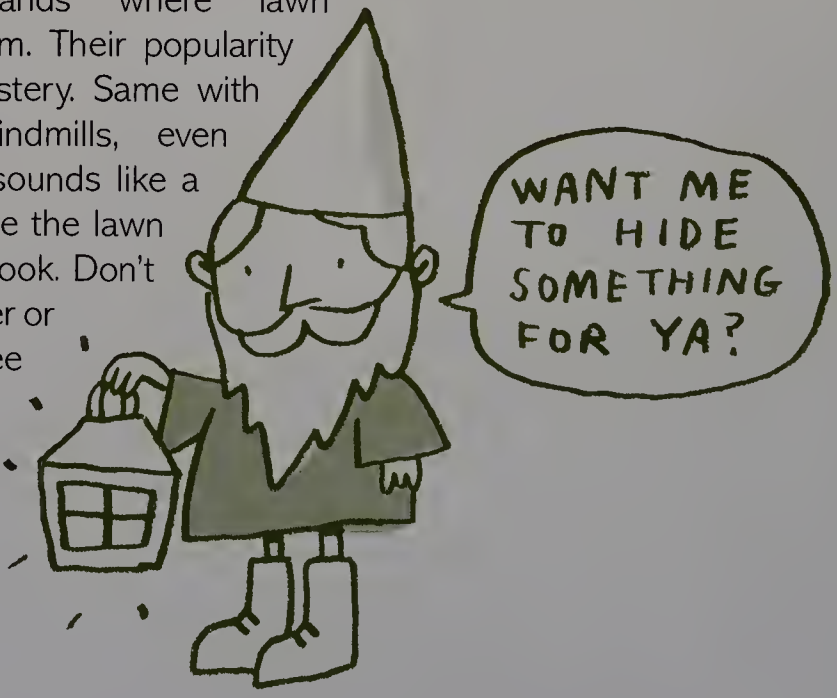
Lots of metal gates and fences are made with hollow poles. Is there a low fence near you to examine? Sometimes there are little caps on top of each pole. If one is loose, you have a long, deep hiding place of your very own. You can tie a wire to the top and dangle your cache down inside it. Or put it in a plastic bag that's big enough to keep your goodies from sliding down too far.

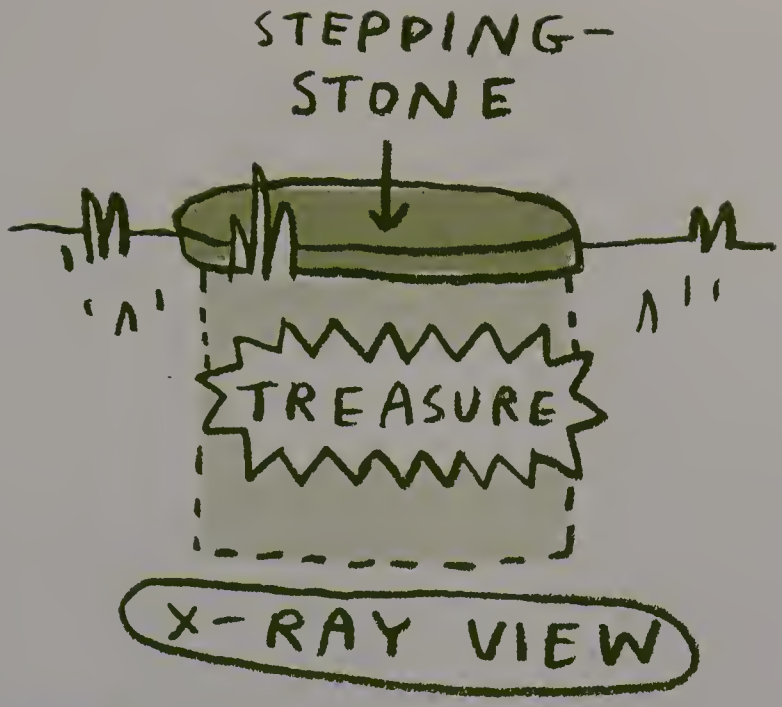
HOSE HOLDER:

Some families leave their garden hoses outside. Is yours wrapped up in a circle? (Hiding place!) Is yours coiled around a little Ferris wheel? (Hiding place!) Does yours lie in the plants like a snake? Tape your treasure right to it, or connect a string between the hose and your cache—then plant it among the plants.

GNOME HOME:

Nobody understands where lawn gnomes come from. Their popularity is a complete mystery. Same with little statues, windmills, even flamingos. If this sounds like a lawn near you, give the lawn ornament a quiet look. Don't knock anything over or force it . . . just see if there's a good little hiding place somewhere. That's one friend who'll always keep your secret.





HEAVY LIFTING:

Got a garden with flat stepping-stones? Pull one up and dig a little hole deep enough for whatever you're hiding. Replace the stone and you're safe. Add sticks, dirt, etc. on top to make it blend in, and be sure it doesn't wobble. If you don't mind a bug or two, and you stash your cache in a rain-fighting plastic bag, you're in business.

YOU AUTO TRY THIS:

If you want a wheel good hiding place, your family car is a star. See those floor rugs under your feet? Check. See that center armrest that tucks back into the seat? Check. And don't forget that side armrest with the door on top—put a few napkins over your stash and you're ready to roll. The bigger the car, the more you can hide while you ride. You can also hide something small in a hide-a-key tucked over the tire, but be careful getting it, especially on the highway.

OUT AND ABOUT

SLIDE IT BY THEM:

Playgrounds in general are lousy places to hide stuff. All you've got are kids and custodians—the two groups most likely to find what you hide. In the entire playground, what's the most dependable place for a short-term hide? Under the slide. Don't bury it. You won't fit and it takes too long. Just wrap it in something dark, and waterproof, near the bottom.

SNOW JOB:

Some ideas only work sometimes in some places. Keyword: snow. Make a snowman and give it a secret stomach. Set up a snow fort with its own hidden mailbox. Take a boring little snow pile and bury a boring little white plastic bag. The usual warnings apply: Snow melts, piles shift, people shovel, objects freeze. But why let that stop you?

FEEL BUSHED:
What's that under the bush? Leaves? Branches? Pine needles? Sounds good. And the only people under there are squirrels, who aren't really people. Lay flat items under a natural cover for a short-term hide. Or dig a hole small enough to hide a washed-out yogurt container. Then give your cache a blanket of brush to hide it a while longer.

QUICK QUIZ #1:

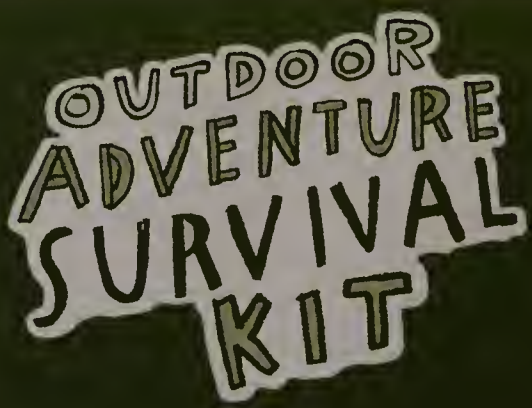
Name three neighborhoods where there are absolutely no signs posted. Guess what. You don't live in any of them.

QUICK QUIZ #2:

How many signs have you really examined closely for hiding places? Guess what. Tape, magnets, sticky notes, or your own homemade solution will help any sign keep your secret.

BENCH, BUS, AND BEYOND:

Park benches, bus shelters, and community message boards are meant for everyone to use, but not always for the same reasons. You can leave messages on, around, or underneath them—and your friends can come by later to collect. Be careful of sharp objects, strange smells, or people who might be hanging around. Use your head.



HERE'S WHAT NOT TO DO OUTSIDE:

- DON'T bother people's yards, gardens, lawns, and landscaping. People are incredibly picky, they'll find what you hide, and they'll get mad.
- DON'T do permanent damage. Do you really want to spend your next three years' allowance on tulip bulbs?
- DON'T play around pipes, wires, and anything else like that. Once you break it, you'll find out only too quickly why it was there. If you live.
- DON'T do daredevil things on ladders, in trees, near water, in traffic, and so on.

If you need a book to explain how not to kill yourself, you shouldn't be reading this book. Or it.

SCHOOL SECRETS

The second and third reasons for hiding things at school are to pass messages and to protect your stuff. (The first reason is to have fun, but you already knew that.) These educational clues help you hide almost anything . . . except your report card.

SETTING UP YOUR LOCKER

On the outside, your locker looks just like everyone else's. But what's different on the inside? Maybe yours has a few little secrets of its own.

HIDE IN PLAIN SIGHT:

Even the smallest little corners, folds, and turns can make your locker a private vault. Open your eyes and take a look around. Are there parts that are hard to see, unless you're very short or very tall? What color is the paint? Will magnets stick to it? Does the "ceiling" go higher than the door? If you said yes to any of these, you're in luck.

MAGNETIC ATTRACTION:

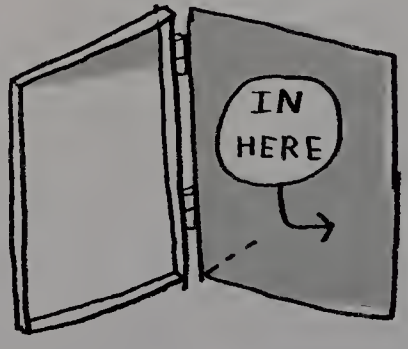
Get a magnetic "hide-a-key" holder at a hardware store for a couple of dollars. Or make your own: Get a magnet and glue it to a low, flat, small box. Cover it in black tape if it's another color. Put the magnetic box under your locker shelf, in a corner, or anywhere it won't be seen, to hide money and more.

STICKY PENS AND PENCILS:

Before opening your locker, roll up a bit of masking tape or Scotch tape around the pen, ***sticky side out.*** With the clip side down, reach up under the shelf to hide your pen behind the lip of the shelf, if there is one. Or maybe your locker hangs over the wall a little bit at the bottom. This is another good place to tape up a pen or pencil—you can pretend to be tying your shoes.

QUICK PENCIL DROP:

Get a dark-colored travel toothbrush holder. Tape it into a dark corner of your locker. (That may be the corner closest to your lock, or the hinges. Look around from the usual angles.) You can store your pens and pencils in this handy holster at the end of every day . . . out of sight.

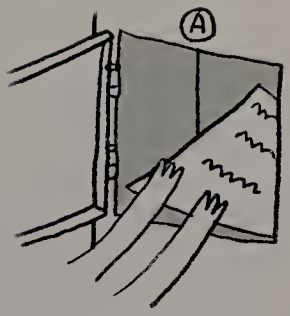


ARTFUL ART:

Glue a picture or poster to a piece of cardboard or poster board. It should be at least an inch thinner than the locker wall. Glue small, thin magnets to each corner, almost to the edges but not exactly. Glue or tape a pocket, an open envelope, or trading-card sleeves to the back of the cardboard. Now you have a removable place to hide your cards, notes, and papers.

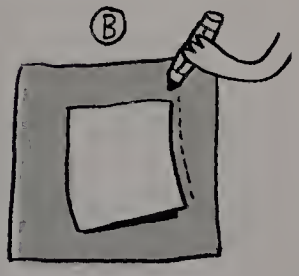
FLIP ART:

This idea is a little simpler than the last one. Glue the same poster to the same cardboard. But tape it along the top edge only. Tape an open envelope or anything else to the wall, not the poster. Just flip it up when you want your cache. Make sure no one's watching.

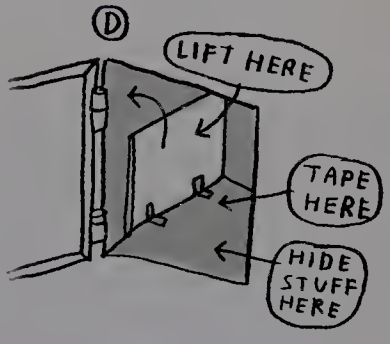


FLOOR BOARD OF EDUCATION:

Make a fake floor for your locker that can hide a few comics, cards, or bad test papers. Measure the floor with a larger piece of paper, or newspaper. Crease the edges along each side to get an exact measure. At home, use the creased paper as an outline to trace over a piece of cardboard, and cut it with scissors. Use paint, construction paper, or contact paper, so your fake floor matches the locker's color. Or you can always use black.



At your locker, make a trapdoor hinge like this: Put the fake floor in place. Then lift the front like you're opening the hood of a car. When the fake floor is against the back wall, use strips of masking tape to connect the fake floor to the real one. When you lower the floor, the tape should be completely hidden underneath. Don't hide too much under there—it'll get found. This idea also works for making a fake ceiling, holding it up with magnets or tape.



FROM DESK TO DOOR

Some secret hiding places have a lot of class. So it's a good thing you're in class a lot, too. Here are a few cool school ideas you can really learn, if you do your homework.

THE WRITE STUFF:

Need a simple under-the-desk pencil holster? Of course you do. Roll a three-inch-long piece of masking tape around and around your pencil, *sticky side out*. Then put the pencil under your desk or table where your hand would naturally go. Pull out the pencil and leave the tape-tube stuck to the bottom. Inside the tube is not sticky, so the pencil goes in and out easily. Bet this works for pens, too.

TRUE OR FALSE:

If your desk can hold books inside, you can adapt a few locker tricks for fun and security. Put in a false bottom or fake art. You can tape an envelope underneath for holding important papers during the day. Keep it light so nothing falls out.

BULLETIN BORED:

Keep papers safe during the day by tacking up an envelope ***behind*** bulletins, or posters, or anything you can easily pull away and put back. This can be tricky in a room full of eyes, so make sure you know what you want to do. And do it quickly.

CLIP TIP:

Have you ever seen a magnetic clip? It's a pretty strong clip connected to a pretty strong magnet. One clip could certainly hold a comic book, pad, or pen behind a file cabinet or under a cold radiator. Find them in the store near the thumbtacks and paper clips.

CAFETERIA CAPERS:

If you and your friend have different lunch periods, agree on a favorite seat. Whoever eats first should leave a sticky note right there, under the table, for the other person to get. It will be appreciated if you warn your friend about the food.

THAT SINKING FEELING:

Water fountains aren't the only wet drop spots. Bathroom sinks work, too. You should be fast—expect the cleaning crew to find it (or hope they clean enough to find it). Either way, don't touch the toilet. Ugh. Ugh.

FORTUNE COOKIE:

If you've got a dollar to hide, a phone number to hold, or a note you have to keep, the answer might be right in your pocket. Take a pen that unscrews and unscrew it. Roll up your piece of paper ***super tight*** around the ink cartridge. You might need a piece of tape to keep it rolled up. (This could also work for a mechanical pencil.) If you haven't been too ambitious, you should be able to re-screw the top and click the pen. Also a great way to pass notes. Speaking of which . . .

PASSING MESSAGES

Passing messages takes planning, timing, and keeping cool. When it works, it's no accident. And if you get caught, it's not our fault and we don't know you.

NOTEWORTHY ADVICE: KNOW THE PLACE

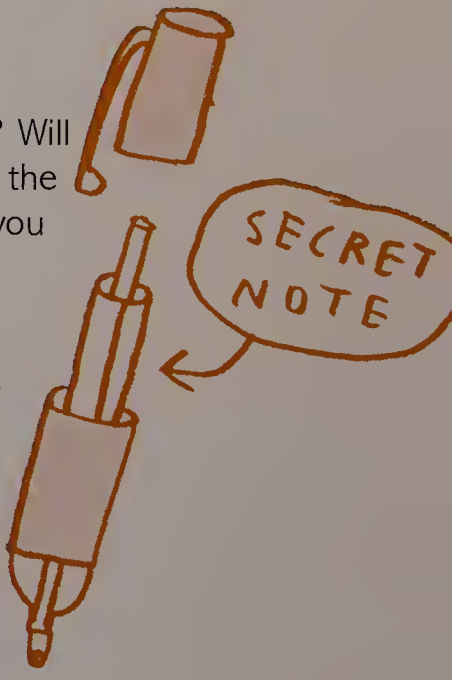
You and your partner should agree in advance where to make the drop.

KNOW THE PLAN:

Will it be a one-way or round-trip drop? Will your partner leave something for you at the same drop place? Sometimes each of you needs to have your own secret location.

KNOW THE TIMING:

When will it be there? Agree in advance, or else one of you will come up empty. It's suspicious to visit a drop place more often than absolutely necessary.



KNOW THE SIGNAL:

If you haven't planned a drop but you need to get a message out, here's how to do it. Arrange a signal that your partner will find, like an innocent message on a locker door, or a secret symbol on the classroom board. Your partner should then know where to go for the real message.

KNOW THE RISKS:

Even the best-hidden messages should still be in code. Expect that your note will be found by the worst possible person. At the same time, codes make even the dullest message more fun.

PICK A PROPER PLACE:

Here's how to find an unfindable drop place. What works best?

Choose a public place so you can explain why you're there. No trespassing.

Start your search along walls and edges, not necessarily in the middle of a place.

Look up, down, and sideways . . . in places where people don't normally focus.

Make sure your drop place isn't about to be carried away, cleaned up, or carted into a closet.

STICK WITH A WINNER:

Leaving secret messages doesn't give you lots of free time. You want to get in and out fast. The most sensible message system is the sticky note. They're not expensive, they come in all kinds of sizes and colors, you get lots on a pad, and they're fast. Each partner can pick a signature color, but remember—neon colors defeat the purpose.

UNDER-STANDING:

Don't underestimate the power of under. Put your sticky notes under a chair, under the seat in the school bus, under the library table, under a book as you're walking by your friend's desk. If you're sitting next to each other, put it under your shoe and see if you can cross your legs just so. Understand?

BACK IT UP:

For extra security, write your coded message on the *back* of the note, and write something really plain and boring on the front, like "Field Trip on Monday."

CODE WARRIOR:

Elite intelligence operations know two or three codes. If one gets broken, there's always a fallback. If it isn't obvious, use a special symbol to explain which code is in use.

CLEVER CLUES:

You can hide your message and leave your partner clues for the pick-up. If it's under a water fountain on the second floor by the music room, your clue can be "H_2O on 2 near tunes." Leave this message in your partner's drop place. Don't make it impossible to decode.

SPECIAL BULLETIN:

School bulletin boards can be perfect places for short-term message drops. Flat items can be taped or tacked behind official papers. Don't damage any public messages or message boards while you're setting up your own.

POSTER POSER:

Now and then, posters pop up for bake sales, school plays, and special visitors. One might make a good message drop. Peel the tape away from the bottom, stow your sticky note, and put the poster back in place.

FOUNTAIN OF KNOWLEDGE::

You probably can't remember the last time you looked under a water fountain. Neither can anyone else. That's why this is a great place to leave secret messages between classes.

IN A BIND:

If you're like most students, you probably don't value your textbooks. Look again. Open it on a desk and the binding makes a handy opening. *Voilà!* A great place to store notes.

MOUSEPAD NOTEPAD:

Next time you see a mouse in school, you're seeing a great short-term message drop. Leave it under the mousepad, or under the keyboard, or under the computer table, just before your friend comes by. Watch for watching eyes.

TEACHER'S A HELPER:

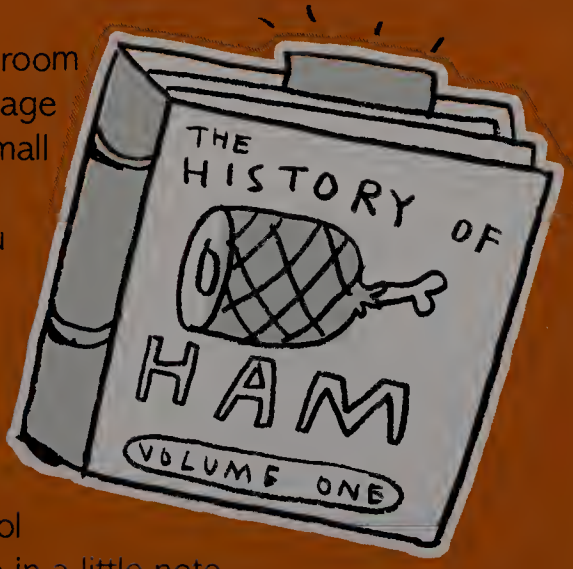
Low is the way to go, right under the bottom drawer of the teacher's desk. Who looks down there? Few custodians, and certainly no teachers. Walk up, stop, pop your sticky-taped or magnetic hiding system into place, and keep moving. Making a pickup should be done just as smoothly. Pretending to tie your shoes is a good excuse. Just not too often, and definitely not with Velcro.

FAST WIPE:

What's that in back of the napkin dispenser? Not napkins. It's a nice little bit of space to leave a note for someone. But plan a quick pickup. Cafeteria workers move fast.

SECRET BOOKMARK:

Pick a book, any book, in the classroom or library. Agree on a permanent page number—say, page 31. Leave a small note, not something huge. Choose a book that's a snore to read—you don't want someone else to check it out first!



PRIVATE DICTIONARY:

Here's a game the spies play while waiting for their submarine. Pick a mystery word in the big school dictionary. At that word's page, slip in a little note with the secret name of a drop place. Later on, give your parner a clue to the mystery word. Make it a fun clue, but not too hard to figure out. When your partner gets the clue, a reward can be waiting at the drop place you named in the note. And then it's your turn to figure out the next clue. You can try this with other kinds of books, too.

MAKE YOUR OWN SECRET VAULTS

Up to now, you've been learning the science of finding hiding places. Now it's time to explore the art of making them. Build each of these homemade vaults, then think up your own. They'll work while you play.

THE TRAPDOOR BOX

Here's a simply deceptive vault that's easy to make and easy to ignore.

HIDES:

Papers, comics, cards, and other flat items up to 1 inch high.

MAKING IT:

1. Pick a **cardboard box** or **shoe box** that looks plain and boring.

2. Get a **second box** of the same color and material. One side of this box will be cut up to make the false bottom of the vault box. Make sure it's big enough, and doesn't have holes.

3. Measure the bottom of the vault box with some **newspaper**. Spread it out and crease the paper's edges to make an accurate impression.

4. Cut the paper along the creased edges with **scissors**. Take a **pencil** and trace the paper along the second box. You're measuring the exact sides of your false bottom.

5. On the second box, cut out the cardboard carefully. Make sure one side has no writing on it.

HIDING IT:

1. Lay your treasure flat. Comics, cards, etc. should be in tight plastic bags. Tape it down to make sure nothing will slide around. Help the new bottom sit evenly—old up **extra cardboard** to fill in big gaps. Don't hide so much that the bottom looks fake.

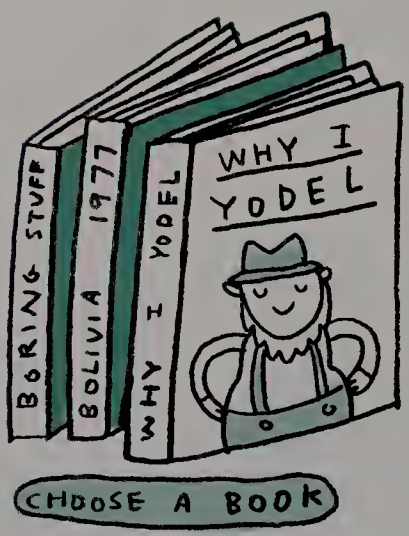
2. Keeping your hands at the edges, push in the false bottom. Don't rush it, since air has to come out. When the false bottom lays flat, cover it with things that won't crush your treasure. Then leave your vault in a corner or a closet. Put stuff on it and around it, and make it look ignored.

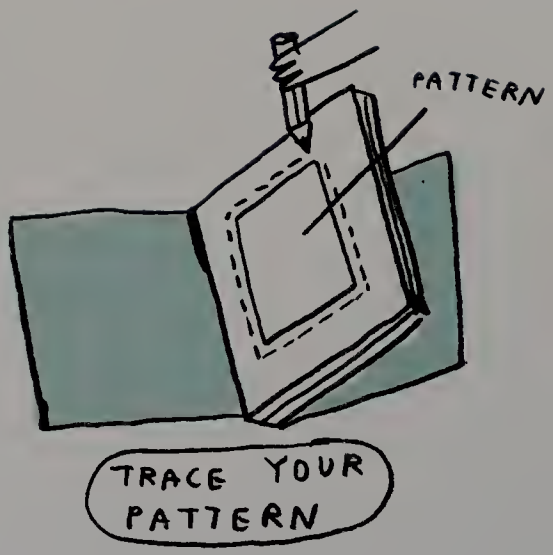
OPENING IT:

Empty the vault of the stuff on top. Turn the box over. The bottom should slide down. If it's tight, take a **butter knife** and gently pry down the edges of the false bottom. Make sure you don't pull too hard and dent the false bottom. Don't give away clues.

THE HOLLOW BOOK

Here's a long-term hiding place that's worth reading about. And it will cover your stuff perfectly.





HIDES:

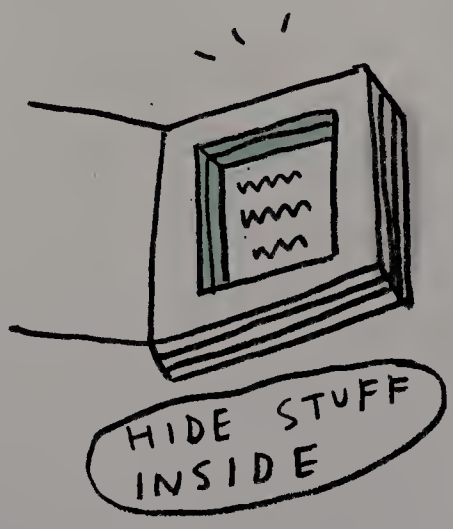
Anything that's the size of your hand, depending on the size of the book and the size of your hand.

MAKING IT:

This project needs an adult's permission and help with the cutting.

1. Select a book. Don't wreck a book that someone might want to read. Go to a used bookstore and find a **big, cheap, old hardcover book**. Or ask for a damaged book you can have for free. Pick a boring book that won't attract readers. Suggested titles: *1953 Travel Guide to Bolivia, You Can Be a Blacksmith, Why I Yodel,* and *Introducing Television: It's Radio with Pictures.* Or use an old phone book, if you can find one.

2. You want a sturdy book, so don't cut too big a hole. First you need to make a pattern. Cut a **rectangular piece of cardboard** that leaves an inch or two of paper on each side of the book's pages. The more paper you leave, the more sturdy your vault will be.



3. Leave several pages at the beginning of the book to hide your hole. Then fit the **rectangular pattern** on the page where your hole begins. Use a **pencil** to trace the pattern. Now you can go in two directions.

THE FAST AND SIMPLE WAY:

4a. This version is quick to make, but leaves a hole at the top of every page. (Put it on a high shelf and no one will see the hole.) Trace your pattern along the top edge of each page. Leave enough room on the sides and bottom to support your cache without the book falling apart. Now take **scissors** and cut around the pattern, starting at the top.

5a. On the next page, you can use the hole you just cut for your outline. Snip each page using the previous page as a guide. Go almost all the way to the book's last page . . . you want to leave several pages in the back for support and secrecy.

THE MORE SECRET WAY:

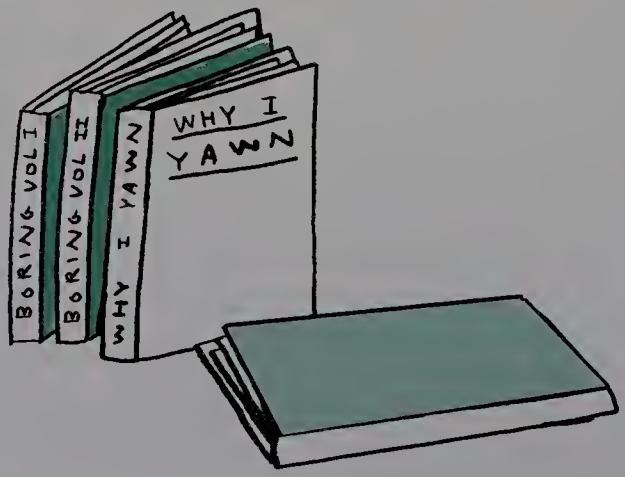
4b. This version takes longer to make because you can't see the hole from the outside. As before, draw the rectangular outline, but in the middle. Now ask an adult to poke one sharp point of the **scissors** into a corner of the outline. Once the scissors go through the page, cut the center out normally.

5b. Take a ballpoint pen and trace the cut-out page on the one beneath it. Repeat this on each page until you're most of the way through the book. Be sure to leave several pages uncut at the end for extra support.

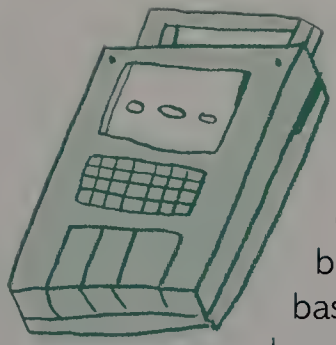
HIDING IT:

You may want to tape the inside pages of your book together so nothing falls out. That's okay, but put tape ***inside the hole only***—along the cut-out edges, like making walls for a swimming pool. Don't stick tape between pages. You can see it from the outside, and it will become a bookmark that opens right to your secret hole. Not so secret.

Whatever you hide should sit right in the hole, and not bulge. If you used a box for a pattern, you can tuck the box inside the book for extra protection. Then put your secret book up on a shelf next to other books people don't read often.



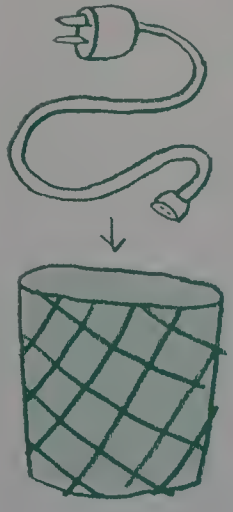
THE EMPTY ELECTRONIC



Last year's cutting-edge technology is this year's obsolete dinosaur. If you know (***really*** know) that your CD/DVD/VCR/Game Console/Stereo/Radio/Player/Recorder/ Plug-In Thing is dead (***really*** dead), then you can bring it back to life. This vault may take a bit more work, but it's worth the effort and fools basically everybody. Get permission, and don't break anything that still works.

HIDES:

Whatever will fit inside.



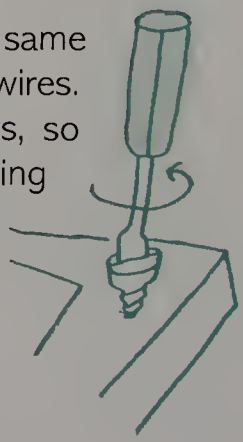
MAKING IT:

1. It bears repeating: Make sure the audio/video machine you're going to use is already broken. If you don't have an old one, go to an electronics repair shop and ask them for a broken machine. If they won't give one away, maybe you can buy one for a few dollars.

   Most audio, video, and game machines are quite hollow and, naturally, bigger boxes hide more.

2. Disconnect the **electrical cord** and throw it away. You DO NOT want to even THINK about electricity near your vault.

3. Take a **screwdriver** and remove the screws that hold the case together. Pull the two halves apart. If there's a label that says "breaking this label voids the warranty" go right ahead and break it. Put your screws in a special place for safekeeping.



4. Almost every electronic gadget is made the same way—the insides are really one piece and some wires. These guts stay in place with just a few screws, so all the machinery should pull out easily. Finding the screws isn't hard. They're usually at the edges, and sometimes in the middle of the guts. Unscrew every screw that seems to connect to your case, then give the inner machine a pull. Eventually, it will budge. And if it won't, use your screwdriver to pry it loose. It's already busted.

5. Connecting wires need to be cut with **scissors** or **wire cutters**. Though you can pull out parts without fear (and with fun), be careful of the parts that go from the inside to the outside—doors, knobs, buttons. You don't want them to fall off and spoil the effect. If they do fall off, use invisible glue.

HIDING IT:

Once the case is hollow, you can cover any inside edges with **masking tape,** if they seem sharp. Fit your secret cache inside any way you want. If you wrap it, it won't rattle when it moves. Put the cover back on and replace the outer screws. Move your vault somewhere you would usually put a broken machine, like a closet floor, basement, or under the bed . . . and forget about it.

THE LUMPY PILLOW

You can rest assured you'll always be comfortable using this secret vault.

HIDES:
Solid objects of any size, depending on your pillow.

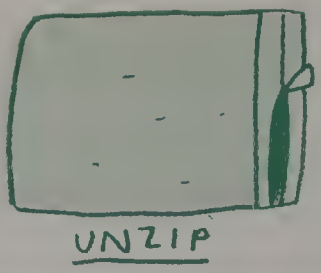
MAKING IT:

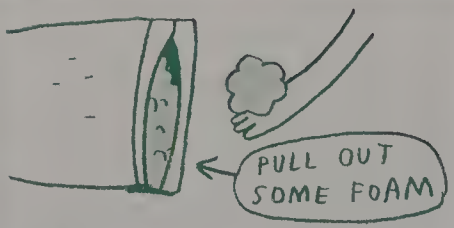
This vault begins by choosing a **stiff but spongy pillow,** the kind most people have on their couch. NOT a bed pillow that spews feathers.

1 **Does your pillow match these critical requirements?**

- **It's not being used, so nobody cares if you use it. Get permission.**
- **It's filled with a piece of spongy foam. And only foam.**
- **It's got a zipper for easy access.**
- **It's not incredibly ugly, or smelly, so nobody throws it away one day.**
- **It's not incredibly expensive. Don't pay more than a few dollars.**

2 Open the zipper and take out the foam. You may have to scrunch it in the middle to get it out.





3 Look at your foam. You're going to hollow out the middle, then cover the hole with some of the foam. Use your hands to pluck out pieces of foam. Don't pull out too much foam, or the pillow won't fool anyone.

4 Stop plucking when your hole is a good size, and there's still enough foam around the edges to feel like a normal pillow.

HIDING IT:

1. Put your cache inside, maybe wrapped in a **sock, washcloth,** or **little towel** to keep it soft. Make sure there's room to put some of the foam back on top.

2. Choose a few foam pieces you took out. Tape them together from the inside to make a plug for the top of the hole. You want to feel foam on the outside—not tape. Put in the plug.

3. Put your pillow back into its case. Zip the zipper and toss it casually on the bed, put it in a corner, or stick it in the closet. You don't want other people sleeping on it. As with any pillow, use your head.

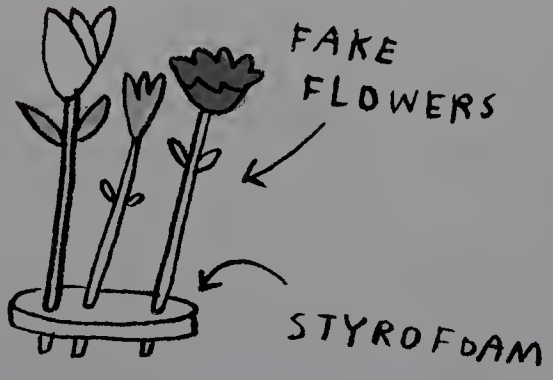
THE FAKE FAKE FLOWERS

The old TV commercials told you to "say it with flowers." Here's how you can get flowers to whisper "I'm hiding something." This vault hides anything that fits in the vase you use.

MAKING IT:

1 It all begins with a vase. Most homes have an ugly one. Junk sales and junk stores always do. And while you're there, find some plastic flowers or a plastic plant. You can also make colored paper flowers. How? Get a craft book, bud—this is hardly a guide for cute crafts. Now stick your pretty paper flowers on stems: chopsticks, pencils, or something stiff.

2 Break off a piece of Styrofoam to fit just inside the top of your vase, the way a cork fits in a bottle. It should be at least two inches thick, so it won't break. It shouldn't be visible from the side. You can also use the fake flower foam they sell at the florist. Find out what it's really called (we don't know) and ask for it by name.



3 Poke one of your flower stems all the way through the plastic foam. You're going to turn this into an L (or an upside-down T) to hook your foam so you can lift it. On the bottom of the foam, out of sight, attach a sideways object like a bent big paper clip so you can easily lift the foam and the other flowers out of the vase all at once.

4 While the foam is out of the vase, stick in the rest of the lovely, lovely flowers. Arrange them nicely. How? Get a floral design book, pal. Now pop your foam into place to cork the bottle.

HIDING IT:

Wrap your cache in something soft so you can't hear it or feel it rolling around inside the vase. **Crumpled newspapers** or an **old T-shirt** might do the job. Be careful it doesn't feel heavier than it should.

Now put your flowers somewhere dull and leave them alone. The secret should be yours alone!

THE SECRET WALL

This is one of the harder vaults to discover, because it's not simple to open. Use it for things you won't need often.

HIDES:

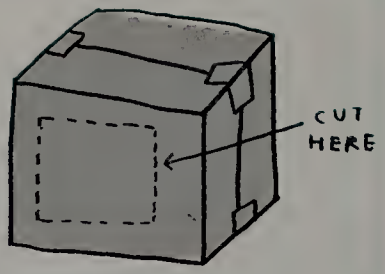
Books, papers, comics, cards, and items up to a few inches thick.

MAKING IT:

1 Find a closet with built-in shelves, a low kitchen cupboard, or shelves behind a door. Pick a low shelf, if you can, because people are less likely to see the wall behind it when they're standing up.

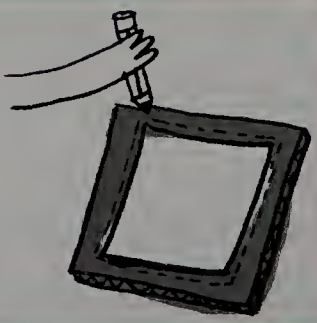
2 Get material to use for your back wall. You can cut a piece of cardboard from a large box. You can use a light, stiff material called Foamcore, which is sold in art stores. You can work with an adult to cut a piece of plywood to fit your space. Or find another cut-able flat material that's bigger than the wall you're hiding.

3 Measure the four sides of the back wall with some newspaper. Spread it out and crease the paper's edges along each side. Pull out the newspaper and cut it along the creased edges with scissors.



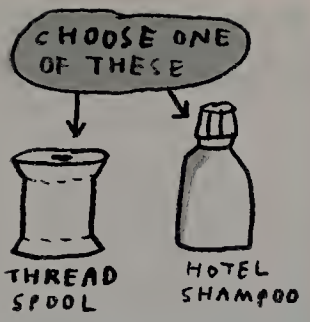
4 Pace the newspaper on your fake wall material. Trace around the edges with a pencil to measure the wall.

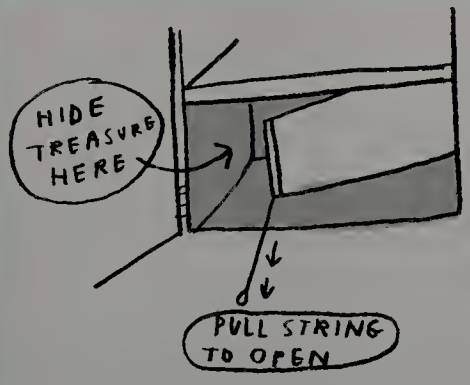
5 If you can't safely cut your fake wall with scissors, ask an adult to help you.



6 Make sure your fake wall is the right color. Use paint, or cover it with paper, or stretch cloth across it, so it isn't noticeable. Contact paper (sticky shelf paper) comes in lots of colors and even wood-grain patterns.

7 Take four empty thread spools, or four empty hotel shampoo bottles, or four small lightweight anythings, about an inch deep. Glue them just inside each of the four corners of your fake wall, but not all the way to the corners.





8 Cut a piece of fishing line or string that's about six inches longer than the bottom of your wall. Tie small loops at each end—you'll pull these to open the wall. Glue or tape the loops near the inside bottom edge, so you can easily pull out your wall once it's in place. You can also run it toward the top if that's more hidden.

HIDING IT:

1. Stand your treasure up against the back wall. Think about using an envelope or bag to hold it in place, maybe even attach it to the real wall.

2. Put your fake wall gently in place—making sure the loops are on the outside. Then put decoy books or other stuff in front to hide it!

OPENING IT:

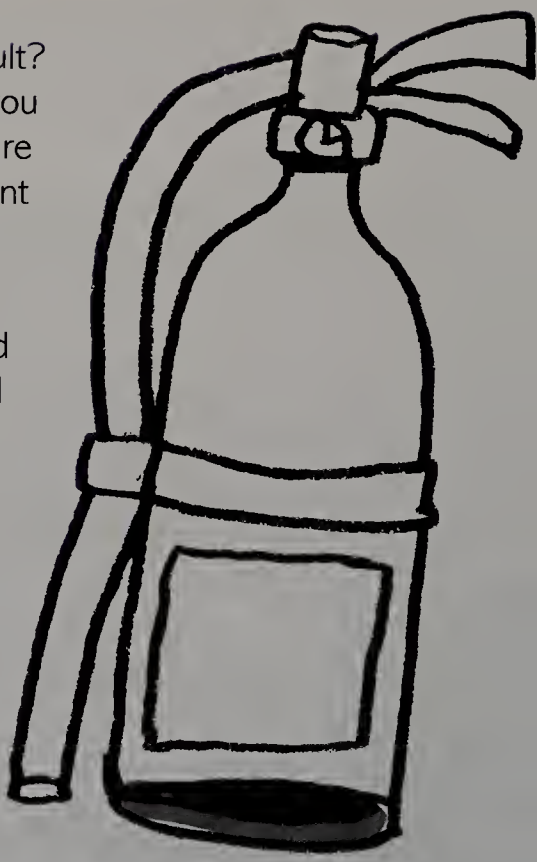
Just pull both secret string loops at the same time. Once the wall starts to come away, you can use your hands.

THAT WEIRD THING AT THE JUNK SALE

What else makes a perfect vault? Keep your eyes open . . . you never know what you're going to find. Clever minds invent clever vaults.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR:

Garage sales, tag sales, used furniture stores, junk stores, and thrift stores are excellent places for your search. Here's what makes the ideal vault:



1. **It's the right size.** Keep in mind what you're hiding. Will it fit? And will it fit easily in your room? Where are you going to put it? Know before you buy.

2. **It's made for hiding.** Remember that this vault has to be easy to take apart and easy to put together again. Check to see that it isn't fragile. Be very sure it has no dangerous parts or edges that can hurt you.

3. **It's not too grungy.** Kids are famous for getting attached to smelly, dirty, disgusting things. Maybe it will hide all your stuff perfectly, but if it attracts bugs (or wrinkled noses) it will soon attract the garbage truck. And then where would your stuff be?

4. **It's the right price.** Usually, the best vaults come from the best bargains. You can hide it in a boring cheap shoe box as easily as in a 1,000-year-old suit of armor. But which one will people examine first?

5. **It's not too weird.** An old bucket lamp without a cord, or an empty fire extinguisher without a bottom, or a big hollow toy or game make excellent starting points. Also, they make sense in your room. On the other hand, a broken refrigerator, a sewing machine, or a car engine are most likely more hassle than they're worth. Being low-key and imaginative keeps you ahead of the game, and permission keeps you in the game. You can have it all.

VALID VAULT ADVICE

As much as you might want to pry open, pull apart, and puncture everything in your house, don't.

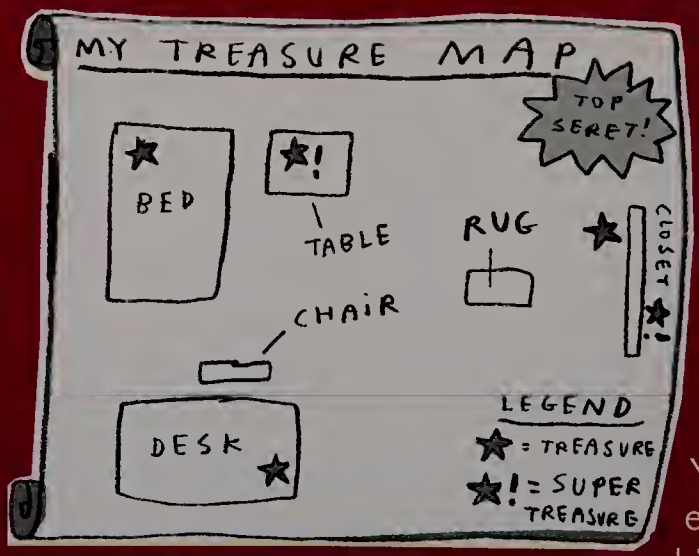
Most people prefer a home where their books don't have holes, their pillows are still stuffed, and their electronic devices still work. Use your own stuff to hide your own stuff, or it's you who will be hidden away for a *very* long time.

MAP IT & FIND IT

Indoors and outdoors . . . underground and above . . . if you forget where you hid it, you'll be looking high and low!

MAKING AN INDOOR MAP:

As best as you can, draw the outline of the room where you've hidden your treasure. It doesn't have to be perfect, just close.



For each major piece of furniture in the room, draw a basic shape. Chairs and some tables can be squares. Beds, couches, and other tables can be rectangles. Some things might even be round. You don't have to draw every piece—just the big ones, and also any piece that's part of a hiding place. If a hiding place is not connected to furniture, use a different shape, like a triangle for a wall location or a star if it's on the floor.

Use symbols or colors to mark what's hiding and what isn't. Your favorite color or two can be used where you've hidden something. Colors you don't like as much can mean there's nothing there. Or use different patterns to mean "something's here" or "nothing doing."

Now that you have your basic room map, it's time to get creative.

A BEAST OF A MAP:

Instead of drawing the basic shapes, draw a completely original picture. Let's say you're drawing animals. Snakes can be the chairs. An elephant can be the bed. And so on. Now you have a room full of critters. Use colors, patterns, or other decorations to show which animals are hiding something. Or maybe ALL the horses are hiding places and every other animal is a decoy. Someone looking at your picture will only see a lot of animals.

What room is it? Use clues in the name of your "picture." Sleepy Animals can mean your bedroom. Animals on TV can mean the room with the TV.

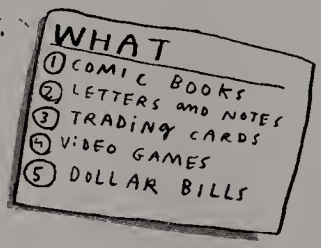
PICTURE THIS:

The animal map idea also works with other figures. Make aliens. Make a town. Make a dinosaur pit. Make a race car track. Make doodles that don't look much like anything . . . but they all show what's in a room.

MAKE A WORD MAP

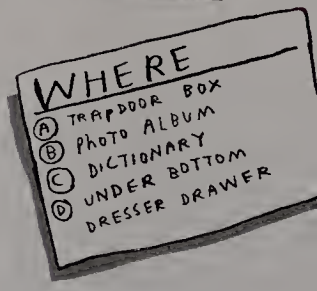
Take three pieces of paper. On the first piece, write the word WHAT at the top. This is a list of the things you've hidden. Give each type of thing its own number.

On the second piece, write the word WHERE at the top. List each hiding place, and give each place its own letter.



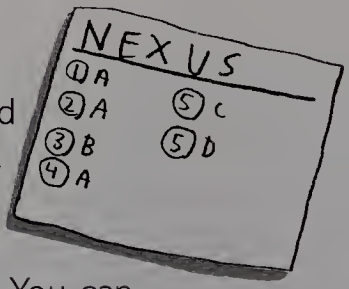
Example

What	Where
1) Comic books	A) Trapdoor box
2) Letters & Notes	B) Photo album
3) Trading cards	C) Dictionary pages
4) Video games	D) Under bottom dresser drawer
5) Dollar bills	



Now make your linking page, called a NEXUS. It's a third piece of paper, and it lists your actual hides, like this:

1A 2A 3B 4A 5C 5D



This means you've got comics, letters, and video games in your trapdoor box vault. Trading cards are hidden in your photo album, and dollars are stashed in the dictionary pages and under the dresser drawer. Simple. You can also share a version of this with a friend at school.

SPECIAL MAP HIDING PLACES:

Hide each of your three important pieces of paper in ***separate places*** that are only for maps. Now all you have to remember are three hiding places. Remember to update your nexus whenever you add or move things.

TREASURE MAPS

Make a map to remember exactly where you've hidden things. You can also use a map to challenge your friends to find what you've hidden.

REFERENCE POINTS:

A functional treasure map will tell you two things: the *general area* and *local landmarks.*

THE GENERAL AREA:

Pick a place that's familiar and accessible—Evan's backyard, the basement, the playground. This gives you a starting point but doesn't tell you a lot. You can describe places with clues only you would know.

LOCAL LANDMARKS:

Now you can begin to give specific clues. Each landmark is something that is easy to identify, doesn't move, or isn't likely to be moved. The route you describe should also be clear and straight. The last item you describe should be your *final landmark*.

If you're in Margot's backyard, your landmarks would be listed like this:

Stand directly between the shed and the water faucet.

Walk five feet toward the house and stop. Look up.

Follow the path of the large tree branch you're under until you can see the Cardonas' kitchen window.

Look under the closest flowerpot. (This flowerpot will be your *final landmark*.)

HIDE AND GO SEEK:

Mapping has its other uses as well. Using local landmarks and final landmarks, you can create an entire scavenger hunt for your friends. Once they find where you've sent them, give them a clue that sends them off in another direction. This game works well indoors and outdoors.

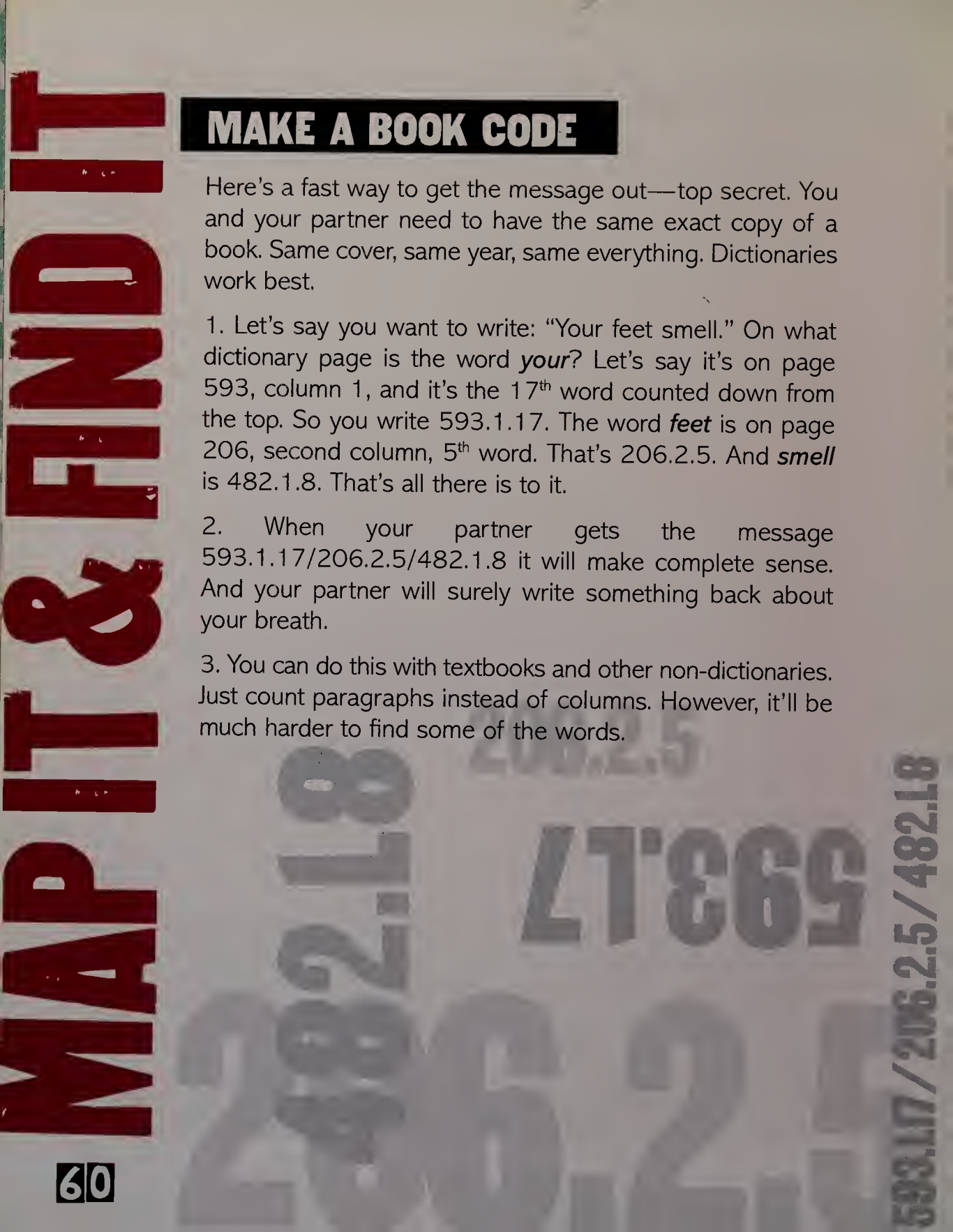
MAKE A BOOK CODE

Here's a fast way to get the message out—top secret. You and your partner need to have the same exact copy of a book. Same cover, same year, same everything. Dictionaries work best.

1. Let's say you want to write: "Your feet smell." On what dictionary page is the word ***your***? Let's say it's on page 593, column 1, and it's the 17th word counted down from the top. So you write 593.1.17. The word ***feet*** is on page 206, second column, 5th word. That's 206.2.5. And ***smell*** is 482.1.8. That's all there is to it.

2. When your partner gets the message 593.1.17/206.2.5/482.1.8 it will make complete sense. And your partner will surely write something back about your breath.

3. You can do this with textbooks and other non-dictionaries. Just count paragraphs instead of columns. However, it'll be much harder to find some of the words.



HOW SECRET IS YOUR SECRET?

Ask yourself these very important questions:

Is the place RIGHT for what you're hiding?

- Is it a hiding place you'll need often, or just sometimes?
- When are other people likely to visit the site?
- Is it a place that could be changed or moved by other people?
- Does it look too much like a hiding place, where others might look?
- Can you make the place look natural and unsuspicious easily?
- Does the site work on its own, or do you need to add something?
- Can you get in and out without attracting attention?
- Are there some things that won't hide well in that place?

If the place is outdoors, also think about this:

- Are weather conditions or other elements likely to interfere?
- Can you get to your site all year round?
- Can the site be easily mapped?

SO SECRET IT'S NOT IN THIS BOOK

There are two kinds of secrets: regular secrets and secret secrets. Guess which ones we're talking about now? And guess where they are?

"No fair!" you say. "Top secret!" we say. If you really want to find them, you need to get on the Internet.

WWW.SECRETHIDINGPLACES.COM

And keep this book handy, because each password is buried inside it.

Let's say you get past security. Now you'll have top clearance to new places for hiding stuff around the house, outdoors, and at school. Sometimes we'll add new ones, too. So watch out.

You can also e-mail your own favorite hiding places for our next book. Each suggestion we use gets you a free copy of that book, and we'll even add your name, if you want.

Remember, only people who own this book can unlock the secret secrets. Isn't that clever?

BONUS POSTER

Guess what? There's one more hiding place for you to learn about, and it's hidden inside this book! Secretly stuck to the back cover is a TOP SECRET poster. Check it out!

By now you know that things aren't always what they appear to be. This poster may look like just an ordinary window, but it's actually another secret hiding place! Remember the Poster Host hiding spot from page 15? Now you have your very own secret poster to test this method out! Tape this poster up to a bedroom wall and sneak a confidential note or picture behind it for safe keeping. The folder on the back cover of this book also makes a great hiding spot for any secret messages...

HAPPY HIDING!

DEDICATION

For Kara and Esther, who always know when I'm hiding something. But not for my own kids. Go read a different book.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

SECRET HIDING PLACES COVERT TESTING TEAM:

Brendan Finn (Team Leader), Daniel Gomez, Andrew Finn, Joseph Gomez, Charlie Gomez, Nathan Boyar, and the staff and students at Windermere Boulevard School, The Summit School, and PS 234.

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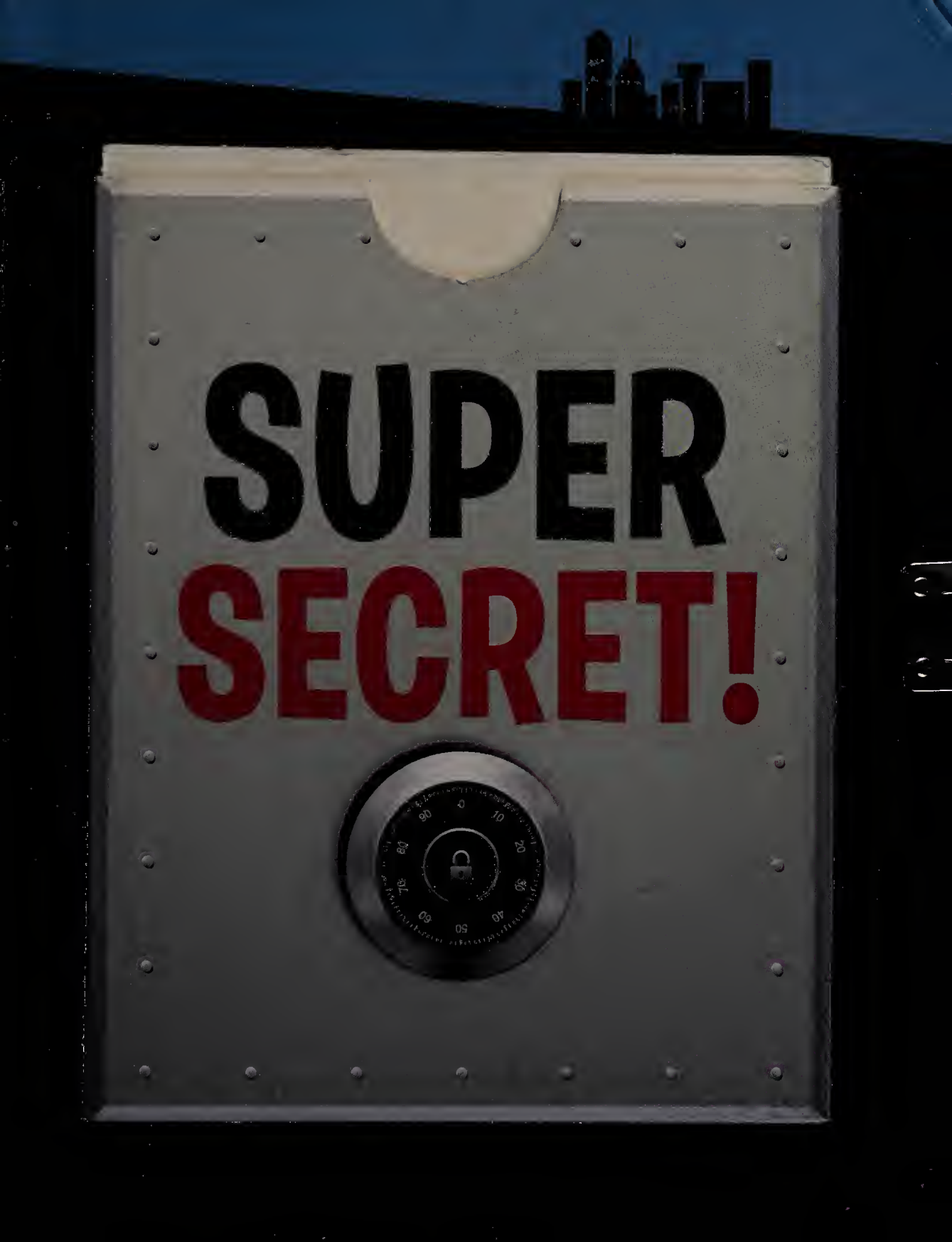
Extra extra thanks to the many thousands of readers who submitted hiding places, suggestions, and questions at SecretHidingPlaces.com

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mark Shulman writes for children and adults.

He was an early reader, an uncle at eight years old, a camp counselor, a radio newscaster, a New York City tour guide, and a creative advertising guy before writing this book. He is the youngest of five children, and he grew up reading Sherlock Holmes and Dashiell Hammett in an old house full of corners.

Mark graduated from East High School in Rochester, NY, and the University of Buffalo. He and his family are now hiding in New York City.


SUPER
SECRET!

If you've got a snooping sister, a barging-in brother, or five-fingered friends, this book is for you.

* Turn any little place into a secret hideout
* Make innocent-looking trick gadgets and trapdoors
* Develop codes and maps with your friends
* Pass messages like a pro
* And get clues to enter an exclusive website

Learn where to look, how to hide it, when to get it, and what to avoid.

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For ages 7 years and up